



NEWS RELEASE

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SCIENTER FORGES CREATIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Sciencenter, a hands-on science museum in Ithaca, New York, has forged innovative partnerships with area businesses to benefit the community while serving as an effective marketing means to bring new visitors to the museum.

"We are always looking for new ways to extend the Sciencenter's signature hands-on experience beyond the walls of the museum and to reach families who might not typically visit a science museum," said Lara Kimber, the Sciencenter's Associate Director. "These partnerships have done more than simply extend the Sciencenter beyond the confines of a physical building. They have resulted in strong financial support, helped grow our corporate membership base and provided an avenue through which more families in our area can learn what the Sciencenter is all about."

Kimber conceived the idea after one of many visits to Ithaca Wegmans W-Kids Fun Center with her 4-year old daughter. In September 2006, Wegmans and the Sciencenter launched a new partnership to recognize increased corporate support and sponsorship of early childhood programs at the Sciencenter. This collaboration brings science-based activities to the children who visit the Fun Center while their parents are grocery shopping. Since then, W-Kids staff has introduced children to a new science-based table top activity each month. To encourage hands-on science exploration at home, families can collect "try this at home" science activity cards that were specially created by the Sciencenter for W-Kids. To close the loop and encourage continued participation with the museum, cards can be collected and later redeemed for 15% off a Sciencenter family membership.

"The partnership has been so successful and so visible that other businesses have begun to approach us with similar ideas for high level sponsorships and collaborations," said Kimber. "We are very selective and evaluate each partnership carefully, considering many criteria from potential to expand our reach to financial sustainability. All sponsorships have to help the Sciencenter achieve its mission of inspiring people to discover the excitement of science, but within this, we have room for tremendous creativity."

One new partnership that fits all of the criteria is a new sponsorship by Greek Peak Mountain Resort (Cortland, NY) in support of winter programming at the museum. Greek Peak is sponsoring a series of free days at the Sciencenter where doors to the museum open to the public free of charge. During these events, Greek Peak has given special presentations at the Sciencenter on the science of snow, making artificial snow and trail grooming. "It complements our educational offerings, while introducing families to the fun of winter," said Kimber. "We playfully call Greek Peak *The Official Sponsor of Winter at the Sciencenter* on all of our promotional materials and have used this partnership to build excitement about outdoor science exploration." As an additional sponsor benefit, the Sciencenter also provides winter-themed science activities to children between the ages of 5 to 10 years who visit The Children's Learning Center at the ski resort.

"We reach new audiences by providing discount Sciencenter admission coupons to children who complete our activities at Greek Peak," added Kimber. "In return, Greek Peak offers coupons for discounted ski lessons during the Sciencenter's popular Free Sunday events."

The Sciencenter, located in Ithaca, New York, is a hands-on science museum for people of all ages with over 200 exhibits, educational programs, an outdoor science park, a seasonal 19-hole miniature golf course, and a gift shop. The Sciencenter has won several awards in recent years, including an international *Leading Edge* award for Innovation in Business Practices, the *2006 Not-for-Profit of the Year* awarded by the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce and numerous readers' choice awards, including *Best Place for Family Fun*.

The museum welcomes more than 90,000 visitors per year. The Sciencenter is accredited by the American Association of Museums and is a proud member of the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC). Sciencenter executive director Charlie Trautmann holds one of 10 U.S. seats on the board of ASTC and represents small museums worldwide.

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